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STATEMENT BY:

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Every school day, over 1,000 teachers leave the classroom for other professions. The rate of attrition is over fifty percent higher in poor schools than in wealthier ones, and individuals who are relatively new to the profession are far more likely to leave it than their seasoned counterparts. The price tag for this annual exodus, nationally, totals at least \$2.6 billion.

The legislation recently introduced by Congressman George Miller (D-CA) – the Teacher Excellence for All Children (TEACH) Act of 2005 – takes a bold step toward reducing teacher attrition and improving teaching by helping states and school districts better train, recruit, and retain quality teachers for the neediest students. The TEACH Act could not come at a more important time. For every three students who enter ninth grade each year, one will drop out and one will not graduate prepared for postsecondary education or the modern workforce. Only one will graduate from high school prepared to go on to college.

Teachers have the greatest impact on student performance, and good teachers in America's classrooms can turn these numbers around. Because providing high-quality teachers makes such an important difference in schools' ability to close the achievement gap, the Alliance for Excellent Education supports comprehensive teacher induction programs, recruitment incentives, and high-caliber professional development for all teachers – recommendations to improve teaching that align with the TEACH Act. An investment like this pays for itself – sharply reducing the cost of teacher turnover, boosting academic performance, and providing students the opportunity to earn higher wages that lead to greater tax revenue.

The Alliance commends Congressman Miller for his introduction of this bill and looks forward to working with Congress to help ensure that federal policies such as these can become a reality.

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The Alliance for Excellent Education is a Washington-based policy, research, and advocacy organization that works to make every child a graduate, prepared for college or the modern workplace. It is funded by the Leeds Family, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, New York Community Trust, and the Daniels Fund as well as by concerned individuals.

For more information about the Alliance for Excellent Education, please visit: www.all4ed.org.